



City of Boston, Massachusetts
Office of Police Accountability and Transparency
Stephanie Everett, Executive Director

OPAT Commission Community Meeting

Minutes

Wednesday, September 21, 2022 | 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting | Virtual via Zoom | 2201 Washington St, Roxbury, MA 02119

Call to order at 11:01 a.m

OPAT Commission Members Present: Chair Stephanie Everett; Judge Leslie Harris (ret.); E. Peter Alvarez.

Chair Stephanie Everett opened the meeting by welcoming attendees.

The Mayor's Office of Language and Communication Access facilitated language services for this meeting. The verbal language interpretation services were provided in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Cabo Verdean Creole. American Sign Language services were also provided.

All attendees were informed that during the meeting: automatic closed captioning could be turned on through Zoom; there were 5 spoken language channels that members of the public could use; this meeting was public and was being recorded.

Approval of June 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Chair Everett introduced the draft minutes from the Commission's June 14, 2022 meeting. Commissioner Harris motioned to approve the minutes and received a second from Commissioner Alvarez. The minutes were accepted and approved unanimously.

OPAT Commission Public Report

Chair Everett noted that this public report is mandated by OPAT's ordinance and will be posted publicly following the Commission meeting. Chair Everett provided highlights from the public report:



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FY23 BUDGET

Internship program: The FY23 budget included funding for the creation of a year-round internship program at OPAT. The internship will place two (2) students - one (1) a high school student and one (1) a college student - within OPAT to expose the students to policy, data, government affairs, investigation techniques and more. OPAT's goal is to start these internships in Fall 2022 and is looking to establish relationships with local colleges and the Boston Public School to identify candidates. Members of the public were also encouraged to refer candidates to OPAT.

BIPOC Consultant: OPAT received funding in the FY23 Budget to hire a consultant to evaluate and improve the hiring, retention, and promotion practices for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) both sworn and civilian employees of the Boston Police Department (BPD). The goal is to increase the diversity of all departments within BPD, from clerks to command staff and to ensure BPD resembles the communities that it serves. OPAT is working in collaboration with the BPD and the Human Rights Commission on this project.

UPDATES

Chair Everett reported that she had met with Commissioner Cox and looked forward to working with him on police reform.

Chair Everett provided a brief update on the progress of the POST Commission, the state agency that supervises all sworn officers in the state of Massachusetts. The POST Commission certifies qualified individuals to serve or continue serving as police officers. Beginning on June 15, 2022, all Massachusetts officers with last names A-H were required to submit applications for recertification. Chair Everett explained that BPD employs 932 officers in this category, a significantly higher number than other municipal law enforcement agencies. The POST Commission granted BPD two (2) extensions to the recertification deadline due to the incoming Boston Police Commissioner and the large size of BPD's force. The latest extension expired on September 15, 2022 and OPAT will provide further details when they become available.



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Chair Everett reported that OPAT has adopted a fiscal year quarterly reporting schedule. FY23 Quarter 1 encompasses July 2022, August 2022, and September 2022. All future public reports will follow this schedule.

OPAT hiring: OPAT is actively hiring for a Community Mediator. The ideal candidate will leverage their relationships with the community to resolve complaints that can be resolved without going before the full board, and be an active participant in community events.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS OVERSIGHT PANEL (IAOP)

Chair Everett reported that OPAT held an Internal Affairs Oversight Panel (IAOP) meeting on August 17, 2022. At this meeting, the IAOP heard two (2) cases, in which the panel reviewed the appeals of BPD's Internal Affairs Division (IAD) findings. In both cases, the IAOP voted to Agree with the original IAD findings.

CIVILIAN REVIEW BOARD (CRB)

Chair Everett reported that OPAT held a Civilian Review Board (CRB) meeting on August 9, 2022. At this meeting, seventeen (17) cases were brought before the board. Seven (7) were dismissed. Of the remaining ten (10) cases, four (4) were ruled Insufficient Evidence, three (3) were ruled Not Sustained, and three (3) were ruled Out of Scope.

Chair Everett explained the process for how complaints are resolved by the CRB when there is a recommendation that the case be sustained. Per Ordinance, sustained complaints shall also include recommendations of discipline from a discipline matrix developed by the Boston Police Commissioner. As of September 2022, OPAT has not received this discipline matrix because Boston did not have a permanent Police Commissioner until August 15, 2022. Once a discipline matrix is developed, the CRB will be able to issue recommendations of discipline for sustained findings. The Boston Police Commissioner can accept or deny a discipline recommendation. If the Commissioner declines to accept the discipline recommendation, they are required to submit to OPAT, in writing, their reasoning for not accepting the discipline recommendation. Chair Everett explained that OPAT is working



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with Commissioner Cox to develop a discipline matrix, which would be made public once completed.

DATA/DASHBOARDS

Chair Everett introduced OPAT's Policy & Data Analyst, Mariah Sabir, to present the FY23 Q1 public report data. Analyst Sabir explained OPAT's mandate to make public BPD's arrest and Field Interaction/Observation/Encounter (FIOE) data available on a monthly basis. At present, BPD publishes this data on a yearly basis. This data is still being analyzed and OPAT is moving to obtain more answers and details on the data. Analyst Sabir provided a detailed review of the data currently available to the public through OPAT's data dashboards, located on the OPAT website.

Commissioner Harris requested Analyst Sabir to analyze the data at the BPD precinct and department/bureau level.

Commissioner Alvarez noted flaws in the racial categories used in the FIOE reporting and asked if it was possible to distinguish between specific racial and ethnic categories to provide a more detailed picture of the groups most likely to experience an FIOE interaction with a BPD officer. Analyst Sabir answered that the public data dashboard on the OPAT website does provide the requested breakdown.

Chair Everett stressed the importance of centering OPAT's work on youth. The FY23 Q1 data showed a large amount of youth experience FIOE interactions with officers. "Youth" includes ages 21 and under. The youngest person to experience an FIOE interaction was twelve (12). Chair Everett explained that OPAT is developing a Youth Advisory Council (YAC) and is working with other City departments to address this problem. Chair Everett expressed the vital importance of engaging with Boston's youth to ensure that they are included in the solutions.



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ANNUAL REPORT RELEASE

Chair Everett reported that OPAT published its FY22 Annual Report on August 4, 2022. The report is available to the public on the OPAT website.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS

Chair Everett noted that OPAT is working to provide public information about who and what OPAT is, the office's limitations, and the office's ability to effect change. OPAT is engaged in a public information drive and is intentional in its distribution of information in public areas; OPAT wants the public to be able to attend meetings at its office and to feel safe doing so. Chair Everett reported that OPAT will be holding future listening sessions and will provide information about BPD's internal structure and function for the public's awareness. Chair Everett reiterated the office's commitment to community outreach and education.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Chair Everett opened up the community meeting to the audience for public comment.

An audience member expressed concern about OPAT's handling of their case and the office's transparency. Chair Everett remarked that OPAT does not comment on individual case details and provided an explanation of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and IAOP's process. This explanation addressed the concern about executive sessions and clarified when and why an executive session would be called under the Open Meeting Law. Commissioners Harris and Alvarez acknowledged these concerns and expressed support for Chair Everett's explanation. Commissioner Harris noted that any concerns about the structure of the OPAT Ordinance can be brought to the Mayor's Office.

An audience member expressed significant concern about the results of the data presented by OPAT during this meeting, noting that approximately 41% of the individuals stopped by BPD in July and August 2022 were Black men, and asked about the mechanics of FIOE data collection. The audience member also asked if OPAT had the authority and capability to implement changes within BPD.



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An audience member asked if surveillance, drones, and/or helicopters were included in OPAT's mandate and requested additional information about FIOE reports. Chair Everett explained that FIOE reports can be requested from BPD through a Public Records request.

Chair Everett thanked the OPAT Commissioners and audience for attending the meeting. Commissioner Harris motioned to adjourn and received a second from Commissioner Alvarez. The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:16 p.m.